HOT TOPIC

Do you recognize this bird ? You shouldn't.

Bryan's shearwater.
Photo by Reginald David

It's been almost four decades since a new species of bird had been recorded in Hawaii (In 1974, scientists described a honeycreeper called the po'ouli on Maui). According to a recent Smithsonian Institute DNA analysis of a shearwater specimen collected in 1963 on Midway Atoll, a distinct and entirely new species was identified.

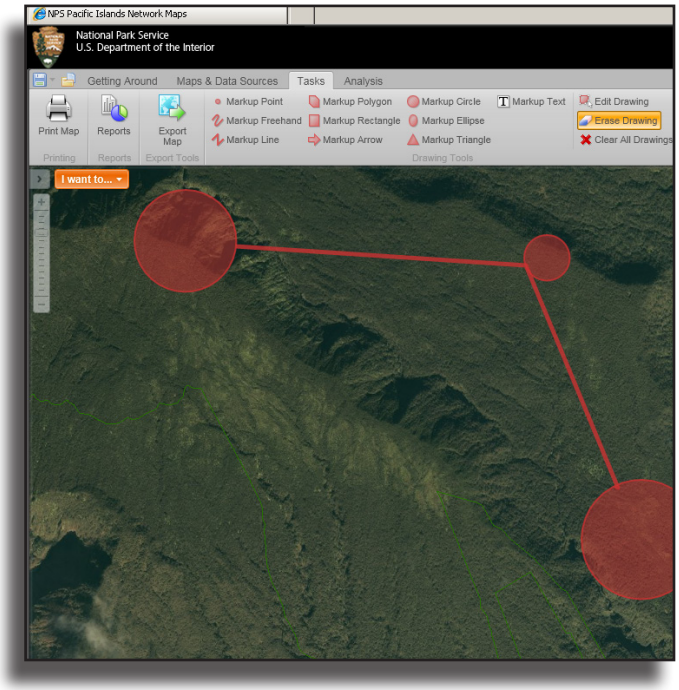
The newly realized seabird species is called the Bryan's shearwater (*Puffinus bryani*) after a former curator of collections at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu which housed the misidentified animal for decades. Very little is know about this bird, but it is believed to be the smallest known species of shearwater. It has not yet been confirmed whether or not the species is still flying over the Pacific Ocean or if it has gone extinct.

Science continues to uncover the secrets of the natural world.

Read more at:
http://smithsonianscience.org
(search for Bryan's shearwater)

Location, Location, Location

Situational awareness is a term commonly used in emergency operations and security centers. The term also applies nicely to those entrusted with carrying out the mission of the National Park Service. It is important to plan for potential safety issues in the field, and visualizing and analyzing what surrounds us is a principle of what we do. Pacific Island Network map services provide ever-evolving options aimed at streamlining information for national park managers. Features include: viewing park assets, conditions, and plot coordinates; using measuring tools; mapping markups; saving and sharing projects; uploading and viewing GPS points and shapefiles; running location searches; linking to Microsoft Bing™ or Google™ services; and enabling print-quality map templates to name a few.



During the March 2011 fissure eruption at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, this mapping capability was put into action to track and notify personnel of lava flows and fires as data became available. Ecologist David Benitez surveyed daily lava flows and fire perimeters and then published the updates to the map site, informing personnel of changes. This method was much more efficient than holding daily briefings or personally contacting individuals.

Mr. Benitez said, "I hope this collaboration leads to improved situational awareness for park staff. These products [web map services] will tremendously benefit emergency response efforts in the park by improving the clarity and usability of geographic information. These products also have the potential to build support for park management activities among local communities through better information sharing."

Wildlife Biologist Howard Hoshide, also with Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, expressed his gratitude for these products, and has helped to test some of the functions. "We use this tool a lot!", explained Hoshide. "It really is much easier than trying to learn the newest ArcGIS software, and helps us with work plans. We use this prior to going out in the field to create project maps and share information with the people who need it."

http://pacn.maps.nps.gov

Although only available on National Park Service computers, this tool has also been leveraged to support dispatch and investigations in the parks. We hope that others will find that these products can simplify their daily workflows as well. As we build capabilities that enhance our specific mission with the NPS Inventory & Monitoring Program, it is a great bonus to be able to share and contribute to other NPS programs along the way.

—B. McMillan, NPS
GIS Specialist